

**Liberals Battle Bushites Over
Best Way To Make War, *Page 2***

**All Auto Workers Should Support
Eastern German Strikers, *Page 3***

CHALLENGE



JOIN THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

July 9, 2003 Volume 38 #13 Suggested Donation \$.50 www.plp.org

IRAQI WORKERS' AND GIs' BLOOD SPILLED FOR BIG OIL PROFITS

"You call Donald Rumsfeld and tell him our sorry asses are ready to go home. Tell him to come spend a night in our building," said Private Mathew C. O'Dell, 1st Brigade of the 3rd Infantry Division. (NY Times 6/15)

As U.S. occupation forces in Iraq face increasing opposition, U.S. soldiers say, "send us home!"

How quickly things change. The Rumsfeld-Bush-Blair gang went from "shock and awe" on the war's first day, to being briefly derailed by some Iraqi resistance the following week, to a quick victory when the Iraqi army basically stopped fighting or disappeared — and some Iraqi generals were paid off. Bush declared on May 1, upon his aircraft-carrier photo-op landing, that the war was basically over. Now we hear reports of a "guerrilla" war. Stratfor.com (on-line intelligence service) calls it a possible Vietnam-style quagmire. Soldiers and elements within the U.S. ruling class are attacking Rumsfeld for his "military shortsightedness." He's turned from a Napoleon to a buffoon.

One mother, writing to the New York Post (6/20) said, "My son is one of those exhausted troops....He told us in letters he was hungry, thin, tired, chewed up by chiggers, his hair was too long, and he was barely clean....It's time to send these weary men home to their loved ones."

Another wrote, "My son, part of the 1st Battalion, 4th Marines, was sent out last November ...and has been involved in the combat and post-combat rebuilding ever since....Don't you think it is time for him and his battalion to come home also?"

These GI's thought their tour of duty was over. Instead they're facing an angry Iraqi population and guerrilla fighting. Of the 194 U.S. soldiers acknowledged to have been killed since the invasion began, nearly one-fourth have died since May 1 when Bush declared the war "over." The death of six British MPs in what was until now considered relatively quiet southern Iraq shows the war is far from over.

This has revived the Vietnam Syndrome among rank-and-file soldiers, with a potential for protests and demands to be sent home alive. This combination of local resistance and GI rebellion led to the U.S. defeat in Vietnam 30 years ago.

But while many soldiers and their families back home blame Rumsfeld, others blame — and attack — the Iraqis for

continued on page 2

WORKERS REBEL AGAINST RACIST POLICE TERROR

BENTON HARBOR, MI, June 21 — "Yeah, that's what we need!" was the response from a black resident when a PLP member said communism is the only solution to racist cop killings and repression. We came here in the wake of a three-day rebellion of mainly black workers after the racist police chased a young black motorcyclist, Terrance Shurn, 28, at speeds up to 100 mph to his death. This is the latest in a string of racist police killings, including one young black man who was strangled. In the aftermath of the rebellion, Benton Harbor is a police state, with armored personnel carriers and convoys of 20 police cars, three cops to a car, roaming the small neighborhood.

This mostly black community of 11,000 has a 25% unemployment rate and dilapidated housing. Across the river, neighboring St. Joseph is an affluent, mostly white community of 8,700, with a median income double Benton Harbor's and a 2% unemployment rate. State and Benton Township police harass black workers who don't return across the river before sundown and humiliate and terrify young people for no reason. Benton Harbor was once home to many factories. Few are left, such as Whirlpool and auto-parts maker Bosch. The deepening crisis of overproduction has surplusd much of the workforce, forcing those lucky enough to find jobs to labor under slave-like conditions, going from one job to the next. Many find it difficult to land jobs paying more than \$5 an hour.

One woman said she was stopped in St. Joseph for simply spending the day at the beach. Another worker told how the cops stopped two kids and stripped them naked in broad daylight. Even the young children now know from which cop cars they should run for their lives. It's no wonder that Shurn decided to run.

While PLP members went door to door, an armored vehicle rumbled down the street. State police stopped and harassed workers for no reason, nearly sealing off the area. The police stopped and detained dozens of black workers, confiscating their cars for minor offenses.



Benton Township cop, Wes Koza, has a history of brutalizing black workers. He was involved in a high-speed chase that killed a five-year-old child. The year before he used a stranglehold to kill a black worker. So it was no shock that racist KKKoza took up the chase that killed a 28 year old black man whose only crime was speeding. Some in the community say he rammed the motorcycle with his squad car, forcing Shurn to lose control.

Two days before we arrived, Jesse Jackson showed up to say, "Our fight isn't against the police." This millionaire businessman is planning a mass march for "economic justice." (Benton Harbor's police chief is his former bodyguard.) We'll be there to expose these misleaders and bring the ideas of anti-racism and communism to the workers.

We distributed 200 CHALLENGES. Two people expressed how important it was for them to go and show solidarity with Benton Harbor's workers. We made several contacts and many workers took extra CHALLENGES for their friends and family. Some asked us to return. Our plan is to take more people back with us to meet these workers who are open to our revolutionary communist ideas.☺

EDITORIAL: War is Also on Liberal Dems' Agenda

The dominant liberal wing of U.S. capital hopes to use Bush's Weapons of Mass Destruction scandal to unseat him in 2004. But a Democratic victory next year will never benefit the working class. By exposing Bush's lies about Iraqi weapons, the New York Times, the Washington Post, Senator Jay Rockefeller and others are, in fact, advancing the cause of war and fascism.

On June 17 in Washington, the New Democrat Network (NDN), founded by presidential candidate Joe Lieberman, outlined its six-point Agenda for the First Decade of the 21st Century. Blessing the NDN program were, along with Lieberman, presidential contender John Kerry and General Wesley Clark, who directed the U.S.-led bombing of Serbia during the Clinton regime. Each plank in the liberals' platform promotes either imperialist wars abroad or tightened social control at home.

Their foremost goal is to "Assert Responsible Global Leadership: win the war on terrorism and end international conflicts that threaten our interests, ensure that America's military is the strongest, most agile, and best equipped in the world." "Our interests" is a code for U.S. control of Mideast oil that goes back to the Carter administration. The NDN covers its war aims with the usual liberal humanitarianism. While it invades nation after nation, the NDN says the U.S. will also "combat AIDS and other pandemics that threaten global stability, and work together with our allies and international organizations to advance democracy, liberty, free markets, opportunities for women, and rising standards of living across the world."

Next is a call to "Protect the Homeland: Help the new Homeland Security Department create and implement a comprehensive homeland security strategy." Translation: more domestic spying on workers, more deportations and more imprisonment without cause. Under the heading "Strengthen Families and Communities" come plans for expanding fascist community policing and launching "community service" programs that open the door to a new military draft.

The New Democrats say: "Modernize Our Health Care System: provide all with access to quality and affordable health insurance, address the rapid rise of costs, reform and improve Medicare and provide a market-based prescription drug benefit." These moves serve the main wing's need to wrest control of health care from the drug and insurance companies. GE, GM and other large corporations don't want to send billions to those outfits in paying for the health coverage of their workforce.

The remaining points in the NDN agenda are the age-old Establishment demands for conservation and free trade. Since President Teddy Roosevelt's day, conservation laws have helped ensure a supply of raw materials for the more powerful capitalists at the expense of upstarts. And, throughout the history of the profit system, free trade has benefited the nation with the military might to enforce its access to worldwide markets and cheap labor.

Completely absent from the New Democrats' agenda and from the rhetoric of the viable candidates is any anti-war sentiment. Lieberman, Kerry, and Gephardt all supported Bush's murderous invasion of Iraq. The Democrats differ from the Bush gang only tactically, over how much of a humanitarian fig leaf they should put on their imperialist butchery. On the very day the NDN met, Sandy Berger, Clinton's national security advisor and a major Democratic strategist, was at the liberal Brookings Institution praising the U.S. war machine's slaughter of tens of thousands of Iraqi workers. "I believe we did the right thing in Iraq...I am glad the Bush administration has made the greater Middle East a policy priority....President Bush has set ambitious goals. He has acted boldly. I respect that."

Lieberman, Kerry, and Gephardt have chastised Bush for doing too little, too slowly to carry out the drastic homeland security measures presented in the Hart-Rudman reports. And in an unprecedented move, Rand Beers, a domestic terrorism expert on Bush's National Security Council, quit in frustration and jumped on the Democrats'



bandwagon. "Beers' resignation surprised Washington, but what he did next was even more astounding. Eight weeks after leaving the Bush White House, he volunteered as national security adviser for Sen. John F. Kerry (Mass.), a Democratic candidate for president, in a campaign to oust his former boss" (Washington Post, 6/16). Said Beers, "The administration wasn't matching its deeds to its words in the war on terrorism. They're making us less secure, not more secure." This advocate for fascism thinks the Democrats will be more successful at implementing it.

Whether a Democrat or a Republican sits in the White House, we can expect more U.S.-led invasions and some form of a sharper crackdown on U.S. workers. Real political change will come about only when the working class seizes power in a communist revolution. The many aspects of the long-term struggle toward this goal form the platform of the Progressive Labor Party. These include building a base of co-workers, friends, and neighbors; leading class struggle against the bosses' growing attacks; widening CHALLENGE circulation; sharing our communist analysis of events, and recruiting new members to PLP. ☸

Vietnam Syndrome Coming to Iraq?

continued from front page

the situation they're in. This is a crucial question. GI's must understand that their enemy is the U.S. bosses who lied through their teeth in order to seize the huge Iraqi oil reserves (world's second largest), as part of their drive to remain the world's number one imperialist power.

Liberals Want Bigger Military

The liberal bosses and many in the U.S. media are attacking the Rumsfeld-Cheney-Bush military strategy for another reason: underestimating the number and rotation of troops needed for the occupation of Iraq and future wars. The liberal Wash-

ington Post worries that the lack of rotating more troops will make the army less effective as a fighting force for the bosses. It reported that U.S. troops are "'frustrated and disillusioned' as peacekeepers deployed too thinly." Even right-winger Robert Novak (New York Post, 6/23) says, "the unspoken fear in Army circles is that complaints will depress reenlistment, so important to an all-volunteer force, and ultimately diminish the vital corps of non-commissioned officers....With more than 370,000 soldiers, or 70 percent of the Army, deployed in 120 countries, President Bush's capability to pursue his doctrine of pre-emption is constrained." In a speech marking his retirement as Army Chief of Staff, Gen Eric Shinseki warned,

"Beware the 12-division strategy for a 10-division army." (New York Times, 6/23)

Senator Joseph Biden, leading Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said, "I think we're going to be here in a big way with forces and economic input for a minimum of three to five years." (Time, on line, 6/23)

The Bush Administration has contracted troops from other countries, including India and Honduras, to help occupy Iraq. The press in Central America reported that Honduran rank-and-file soldiers will be paid \$5 a day to help occupy Iraq!

The Rumsfeld camp and the liberal hawks are fighting over the best way to run Iraq, control its oil and guarantee a military loyal to carrying out their murderous plans.

The interests of rank-and-file soldiers from the U.S., Iraq, India and Central America are the same: to unite with each other against imperialism and its wars for profit. Class-conscious workers, students and soldiers can take advantage of the imperialists' problems to make their nightmare — of working-class, anti-racist unity and rebellion in the ranks — come true. ☸



WHAT WE FIGHT FOR:

☸PLP fights to smash capitalism—wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world. The Soviet Union and China returned to capitalism because socialism maintained too many aspects of capitalism, like wages and divisions of labor.

☸Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism. This fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.

☸Communism means working collectively to build a society based on need. We will abolish work for wages,

money and profit. Everyone will share society's benefits and burdens.

☸Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.

☸Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.

☸Communism means abolishing nations which leads to nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

☸Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers, eventually everyone must become communist organizers.

JOIN US!



CHALLENGE PERIODICALS
PO Box 808
BROOKLYN, NY 11202
www.plp.org
email:
cd188@juno.com
718 630 9440

CHALLENGE/DESAFIO (ISSN 0009-1049) published bi-weekly by Challenge Periodicals. 1 issue \$.50. Subscription: \$15. Six months: \$10. Send address changes to CHALLENGE Periodicals, GPO 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202. July 9, 2003 Volume 38, No.13

Contract Nets Billions for GE, Hazardous to Workers Health

“We fundamentally held the line,” claimed IUE (International Union of Electrical Workers) president Edward Fire about a tentative agreement reached between General Electric and its two main unions in a fight over worker payment of health-care benefits. But according to a Wall Street Journal report (6/17), the contract “succeeds in shifting more of [GE’s] rising health-care costs to its workers, a move that is likely to encourage other large employers seeking similar concessions.” Major companies are using this issue to squeeze more money out of workers’ paychecks to add to bosses’ profits.

The Journal says that next year a single employee’s health-care contribution will jump 52%; a married worker’s will rise 35%; and a married worker with children “would contribute \$14.84 a week [\$771 a year], under a new tier added in this con-

tract. Contributions would increase again as of Jan. 1, 2006.” The family worker will be shelling out more than \$3,000 over the 4-year settlement. That’s “holding the line”?

The workers will receive small wage increases — 3% in the first and last years and 2½% in the two middle years — hardly keeping pace with inflation. Combined with the premium increase, it’s a wage cut. Meanwhile, “poor” GE made more than \$45,000 profit per employee last year.

The deal will help GE continue to be the biggest producer of weapons for U.S. imperialism’s wars — it just netted over \$12 billion in blood-soaked profits — and forced workers to pay for more of those costs. So this settlement really emerges as a war contract.

Contrary to the anti-communist and patriotic IUE hacks, communists try to lead workers to fight all the bosses’

attempts to make us pay for their problems. Workers who produced billions in profits for GE deserve more than wage-cuts and increased payments for health benefits. One obstacle holding back workers is patriotism, which actually means loyalty to the bosses’ class interests. They and their union lieutenants tell us “we must sacrifice to wage war against terror.” But it is workers and their families who do the sacrificing while the big bosses and their hacks live the good life.

During the Cold War, the IUE played the same anti-communist role and screwed the workers in the electronics industry. It was set up to destroy the 650,000-strong militant left-wing UE (United Electrical Workers). When the smoke had cleared, the IUE



claimed 350,000 members, the UE had 50,000, and 250,000 were lost to unionization altogether. GE’s union membership is now down to 24,000. Such are the fruits of anti-communism and patriotism to the bosses’ flag.

Only a communist-led working class can reverse this cycle of sellout war contracts and endless wars, by overthrowing the bosses. To do that we will have to fight these union misleaders who collaborate with the bosses to maintain their capitalist exploitation of the working class.☛

Hospital Bosses Attack — Workers Fight Back!

CHICAGO, IL June 23 — “This is fascism!” declared dietitian Carol O’Neil after being fired last week at Stroger Hospital (the new name for Cook County Hospital — CCH). Carol has never been taken to a disciplinary hearing in her 19-year career at the hospital. But she has defended hundreds of workers over the past 13 years as one of the most active, anti-racist and pro-worker chief stewards in SEIU Local 73/HC (Health Care). She was active in the CCH InCAR (International Committee Against Racism) and waged various campaigns for workers and patients.

The new Nutrition and Food Services boss Amjad Ali has a long racist, sexist, anti-worker history. He recently harassed Mrs. Cooper, a supervisor, over using her Family Medical Leave time to care for her sick husband. At the end of May he took Mrs. Cooper, who had medical problems of her own, to a disciplinary hearing for her attendance. He said she had to decide if she should resign and stay home to care for her husband. Workers never saw her as upset as she was that day. The next morning she died.

One worker said, “I hold [Ali] responsible for Mrs. Cooper’s death.” The shameless bosses actually began building their case against Carol when she tried resolving a grievance after returning to work the day of Mrs. Cooper’s funeral. Eventually they brought seven trumped-up charges against her, ranging from “being out of her work area” to “being behind in her paper work”!

Meanwhile, the union leadership is facing a serious challenge. Carol is running for local office on the reform “Members First” slate (ballots were mailed out just after she was fired). The local covers about 30 worksites. County is crucial to winning and Carol is the key to County. Local President Pia Davis is fighting to keep her \$95,000-a-year office. She told Carol, “You all are trying to take my job,” then insisted on personally “defending” her at the hearing.

On very short notice, dozens of workers signed petitions demanding the charges be dropped and brought them to the hearing. A group of about 20 witnesses and supporters escorted Carol to the hearing, despite Davis’s “concern” that it might intimidate the bosses.

A few days after the hearing, Carol was fired and given a police escort to clean out her office and leave the building. Co-workers were shocked and angry and offered to help. “At first I was embarrassed and then angry,” Carol said. “I told one of my co-workers and she told the rest. I have some fears, but I decided to put my faith in the collective and it was the right thing to do.”

The next day over 100 workers, including Members First leaders, held a lunchtime gathering in the cafeteria to begin circulating another petition to get Carol rehired. About 20 hospital security and Chicago cops failed to intimidate the workers and couldn’t get her to leave because of all the workers surrounding her, showering her with hugs and support. Ultimately, all visitors’ passes had to be cancelled. Even then it took the cops another half-hour to get Carol and her supporters out of the hospital. So much for “free speech” when workers fight back.

Within every attack lies a golden opportunity. We can politically defeat the racism and sexism of the bosses as well as the self-serving union hacks. The fight for Carol’s job has already put many workers in motion and activated many friends of the Party. Our CHALLENGE network helped to distribute 500 PLP leaflets throughout the hospital and more workers attended our last PLP club meeting. Whether or not Carol gets her job back, and she will, we can recruit more workers to PLP, expand the base for CHALLENGE and increase our political leadership in the main healthcare union in Chicago. This reminds us of the power workers have when we unite to fight.

Eastern German Auto Strikers Lead the Way

A series of auto strikes in the former East Germany is affecting the industry nationwide. Workers in the east want to cut their work-week from, 38 hours a week to 35 as it is in the west. Production of Volkswagen’s Golf model at the Wolfsburg complex, VW’s biggest plant, could stop if strikes continue to interrupt the parts flow.

DaimlerChrysler, Audi and BMW have also been hit. Meanwhile, the walk-outs have forced the steel industry to agree to begin reducing work hours between 2005 and 2009.

The IG Metall union started the strikes several weeks ago, under pressure from hundreds of thousands of auto and steel workers. The strikes have erupted while the economy of Germany, Europe’s strongest, is facing the same problems as the U.S.: recession and deflation. Workers are refusing to pay for the bosses’ crisis.

The sharpening inter-imperialist rivalry is forcing both U.S. and European rulers to sharpen the attacks on their workers, to get the money and manpower to build their war machines. Despite appearances, German union leaders are no better than their U.S. UAW counterparts. Nationalism means they’re far more committed to their bosses than their workers.

Autoworkers worldwide

should support these strikes. This fall, contracts expire at GM, Ford and DaimlerChrysler in the U.S. Autoworkers here should follow the lead of their fellow workers in eastern Germany. “Autoworkers of the world, unite!”☛

Nazi ‘People’s Car’

VW and The

To maintain the illusion he was for the German workers, Hitler commissioned auto boss Ferdinand Porsche to build a “People’s Car” (Volkswagen). On March 26, 1938, construction began on what would become the world’s largest auto plant, with the aim of hiring 30,000 workers and producing one million units yearly. The plan included taking money from workers’ paychecks throughout Germany to help them buy a VW. World War II put an end to that Nazi dream.

Only 630 VWs were produced for civilian use while tens of thousands of military vehicles were manufactured for the Nazi Army. Hitler’s regime stole these workers’ contributions for their cars and put them into a war fund. Like many other German companies, VW used lots of slave labor during the war.

When the war ended, Porsche was jailed for war crimes. In 1948, with help from the Marshall Plan, engineer Heinrich Nordhoff became president of VW and began the process which turned it into Europe’s biggest auto company and one of the largest in the world.☛

While Union, Democratic Governor Push Racist Cuts: Rank And Filers Resist Boeing's Extortion



OLYMPIA, WA, June 11 — “When will they [the union misleaders] realize we’re at war with global corporations?” complained a Boeing Machinist as dozens of us distributed thousands of leaflets hand-to-hand, attacking the union-backed cuts in worker’s compensation and unemployment insurance. “They’ll never be our friends.”

Boeing has demanded billions in concessions from 18 states competing for final assembly of the company’s proposed new jet, the 7E7 — “E” for “extortion.”

Washington State’s Governor Locke — a rising star in the Democratic Party who recently gave the Democratic reply to Bush’s State of the Union speech — agreed to keep the company’s demands secret. Meanwhile, he helped orchestrate a \$3.2 billion, 20-year Boeing tax cut. That translates to \$133,000 a year for each of the 1,200 workers the new factory would employ.

Worker’s comp. and unemployment insurance (UI) will be slashed whether or not Boeing decides to locate here. Thousands of injured workers, particularly those suffering hearing loss from noisy Boeing factories, will find themselves cut off without a cent. The 35,000 laid-off Boeing workers will

have their UI benefits capped immediately. Over the next few years, both the duration of benefits and the maximum will shrink. In perhaps the cruelest cut, 44,000 other (seasonal) workers, including 23% of the farm workers, will lose their UI benefits entirely. The rest will be cut even more than higher-paid workers.

The Boeing Machinists union pressured the State Labor Council to agree to cutbacks. The Council, however, balked at shifting the cuts to the poorest workers. Instead, they wanted an across-the-board UI reduction. The Boeing union refused to budge, demanding bigger cuts for the poor. The company drove a Mack truck through the split in the labor lobby, getting huge cutbacks for poor workers and 10% reductions for Boeing workers to boot. No wonder big business and the Republicans invited Machinist political director Linda Latham to their victory news conference.

At those plants receiving significant numbers of our flyers before the legislative vote, workers were furious at “those corporate whores down at the [union] hall.” Our leaflet asked, “Since when has fighting for jobs meant attacking the laid-off?” We rejected any cuts or coalitions with the State’s bosses in the name of “fighting for

jobs.” We called for solidarity with farm workers, the laid-off and workers in other states, many of whom are also Machinists, being subjected to this same corporate blackmail.

The union leadership portrays these cuts as “a great legislative victory.” “Many of these seasonal workers aren’t even in unions,” said Machinist District President Mark Blondin, defending his treachery. “Machinists who work for 15 years or more without ever drawing unemployment is the sort of worker who should be eligible for benefits,” added Linda Latham.

Worker Knows Racism When He Sees It

“What! Is it the farm workers’ fault the growers throw them on the street?” shouted a rank-and-file member, when he heard the leadership’s

itary dominance,” says the British Financial Times (6/10), “[could seriously damage] the American standard of living.” The bosses plan to attack workers at home in order to pay for more pre-emptive military strikes.

Same Enemy, Same Fight

European workers — like those at Boeing’s competition, Airbus — face similar attacks. French workers’ pensions are being cut to pay for France’s own imperialist ambitions. “The European industrialists must unite to resist [U.S. military supremacy],” said French Defense Minister Alliot-Marie, throwing down the gauntlet on the eve of the Paris Air Show (La Monde, 6/14). She envisions an anti-U.S. military/industrial alliance from Portugal to Russia built on the backs of Europe’s workers.

Our leaflet asked, “Since when has fighting for jobs meant attacking the laid-off?” We rejected any cuts or coalitions with the State’s bosses in the name of “fighting for jobs.”

“reasoning.” “Maybe it’s their fault they weren’t born white!” (Most Boeing workers remaining after the layoffs are white, while most farm workers are Latino.) Class-conscious workers, like this white Machinist, know racism when they see it!

The union leaders may not realize we’re at war, but the bosses sure do. They’re bogged down in an increasingly costly occupation of Iraq. “The spiraling costs of America’s global mil-

The bosses and the union leadership want to chain us to the profits of our own individual bosses. We in Washington State got a taste of what that means. Karl Marx’s conclusion to the Communist Manifesto was never truer: “Workers Of The World Unite, You Have Nothing To Lose But Your Chains!” ☸

Deal-making At Boeing's House of ILL Repute

OLYMPIA, WASH., June 19 — It ain’t the House of Blues... or the House of the Rising Sun. It’s none other than the Boeing House (of Ill Repute) in Olympia, WA.

Boeing’s house is just 50 yards from the State Legislature, a gathering place for Boeing lobbyists and lawmakers. According to the Seattle Times, here they sit on the porch, smoke big cigars, and eat pizza.

“It’s also a popular spot for adjournment parties. After this year’s 105-day regular session ended six weeks ago, two House members — one Republican and one Democrat — were seen swing dancing to a jug band rendition of “Up Against the Wall, Redneck Mothers.”

If this weren’t so disgusting it would be funny!

Of course what they were really doing was sealing the deal that Boeing demanded and the Machinists union approved: cut unemployment and disability benefits for thousands of laid-

off and injured workers and provide nothing for seasonal workers.

Yakima Valley farm workers have been picketing the Boeing House (See article above). We will contact them as

part of our summer activities. The bosses, their union flunkies and the government may be dancing together today, but the working class will eventually dance on their graves. ☸

New Slogan, Same Class Collaboration

Last month, the Boeing Machinist leadership launched a campaign to land the 7E7 final assembly in Everett, Washington. Early on, members protested that the campaign slogan “Whatever It Takes” was a blank check for the company. The hacks quickly changed the slogan to the unintelligible “We Can Do It,” hoping to camouflage the attacks on the working class they were about to endorse (see adjoining article).

This campaign will continue through November, when the company announces its production decision. The hacks kicked off their campaign in Everett, billing it as a “Rally For Jobs.” In fact, the rally’s purpose was to mobilize shop stewards and

whatever members they could to lobby for cuts in unemployment insurance and workers’ compensation. They plan to bring this traveling road show to all Puget Sound plants.

In only a few weeks, the union leadership has surrendered any pretext of workers’ solidarity. Their campaign clearly attacks selected groups of workers, the price for their publicly-stated plan to build coalitions with various Boeing-led business councils. The working class must answer with our own campaign, led by those class-conscious workers who can expose the deadly consequences of the union’s collaboration with the bosses. ☸

Capitalism Not As Rosy AS NEA Liberals See It

NEW ORLEANS, June 24 — The media is filled with news about the occupation of Iraq, the failing “peace” in the Mid East, layoffs, racist unemployment, budget cuts and the Patriot Act’s attacks on workers’ rights, all indicating growing fascism. The rich get tax cuts, the working class gets more taxes. But seeming to view this period through rose-colored glasses, the National Education Association (NEA) leadership has called a conference with the theme: The United States of Education — Great Public Schools for Every Child. This week 10,000 U.S. teachers will be meeting here for the NEA’s yearly Representative Assembly, organized around that theme. As the NEA leadership sees the world, things are O.K. so let’s just keep inching along to better schools for everybody, without questioning the direction of a system based on wars and oppression for profit.

In fact, things are NOT OK. These wars, cuts and deficits are the effects of the capitalist crisis on the working class. Moreover, both the Democrats and the Republicans in Congress and in the state capitols intend to continue attacking the working class with war

abroad and cutbacks at home. And they can count on the union leaderships not to challenge their basic assumptions or their spending priorities.

Some union leaders nation-wide are negotiating for their “fair share” of the cuts. Health-care union leaders urge legislators to cut community colleges; community college union leaders urge them to cut K-12; K-12 urges cuts in health care. Others unions unite together, putting up token resistance — mostly lobbying politicians and calling passive demonstrations — against the cuts. Instead of fighting to put a moratorium on the debt paid to the banks — who get theirs no matter what — there are calls for higher taxes on sales, tobacco, real estate and vehicles, all hitting the working class hardest.

Nowhere do we see union leaders — especially true in the NEA — championing the power of the working class. Teachers are workers, and must see that their power lies in uniting with other workers in militant action to shut down the schools and other public services to fight the bosses’ attacks. Recently we saw how almost 200,000

striking teachers nearly shut down Peru, forcing the government to declare a national emergency when hundreds of thousands of other workers joined the teachers. (See CHALLENGE, 6/25)

The NEA is the country’s largest teachers union. We plan to organize among the thousands of NEA representatives who want to expose the blind loyalty of the leadership to this fascist system. We want to bring the ideas of class struggle, anti-racism and anti-imperialism to the NEA membership, beginning in this conference. While we should fight the Bush administration neo-conservatives, the bigger danger facing us are the liberals, including those heading the NEA, who lead us to the same place, just in a “nicer” way.

Teachers must not teach blind patriotism and obedience to destructive wars of profit and conquest. We must challenge a system that attacks working-class youth by sending them to fight the bosses’ wars, only to guarantee the profits of the few. Out of struggles against these cuts and for the truth, we can build our own strength and unity for the long-term fight for

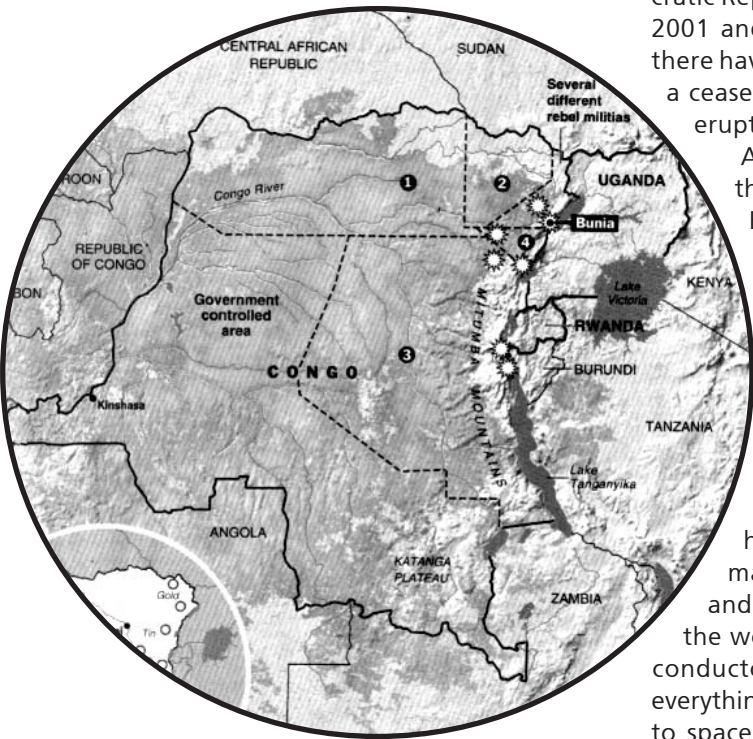
workers’ power.

Capitalism can no more provide “Great Public Schools for Every Child” than it can eliminate poverty, unemployment or imperialist wars. Capitalism is a class society, based on racism, which the bosses exploit for their profits. We need a real communist society where the fruits of our labor will be shared by all. Only then will health care and education for workers be central to society.

We must oppose the NEA leadership in their drive to blind us to the ruling class’s plans. Support any New Business Items which answer these attacks and put us on a path to struggle against rulers’ wars. Read and circulate CHALLENGE and give distributors your name to help build a movement in the NEA.✪



Bosses Kill 3 Million in War for Congo’s Minerals



Three million people have been killed in a war during the last five years involving an area as large as Western Europe. Even though it’s being waged with old fashioned guns and mainly child soldiers, it’s a war for the minerals without which “smart” bombs, cellular phones, videogames, space ships and laptops couldn’t be built. It is not a virtual war game but it’s for real, one that few people outside Africa know about.

For years, the Congo was ruled by one of the CIA’s favorite dictators, Mobutu. He renamed it Zaire. Mobutu became enormously wealthy as a lackey of the U.S. and Apartheid South Africa, helping them arm forces like those of Jonas Savimbi who fought the pro-Soviet regime of Angola. When the Cold War ended, Mobutu, along with Savimbi, became useless to their masters. Laurent Kabila, helped by Ugandan and Rwandan armies — in exchange for future mineral concessions — organized a rebellion against Mobutu and ousted him.

But peace did not come to the newly-named Demo-

cratic Republic of the Congo. Kabila was murdered in 2001 and succeeded by his son Joseph. Since then there have been many unsuccessful attempts to reach a cease-fire with rival warlords. The latest fighting erupted in the Eastern Congo.

Although it’s labeled a tribal conflict, similar to the massacre of Tutsis and Hutus in Rwanda and Burundi in the early 1990s, it’s much more than that. The rulers of Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi support warlords who control the richest part of the Congo. Zimbabwe, Angola, Chad, Lybia and Sudan support the Kabila regime. They’re after the Congo’s mineral wealth: 2/3 of the world’s supply of cobalt, 10% of the copper, one third of the world’s diamonds, huge deposits of gold, manganese, uranium and oil. It also has 80% of the world’s coltan, a super-conductor mineral used in everything from cellular phones to space ships. Multi-national companies, mainly U.S. and South African, are vigorously pursuing this coltan.

Recently the organization l’Observatoire de l’Afrique Centrale (OBSAC), reported that the Canadian-based Heritage Oil Company is now involved. On June 2, 2002, it acquired 30,000 square kilometers of land in Eastern Congo now controlled by the Kabila government. Heritage Oil decided to risk oil exploration in the area. But while Kabila and Uganda’s rulers will profit from the deal, the rulers of Rwanda and its forces are excluded. Until recently, the Rwandan-run militias controlled this oil rich area. France-Belgium’s TotalFinaElf is

unhappy with the deal since it expected to get the rights won by Heritage. Be sure that the French Special Forces sent to the region for “humanitarian reasons” will be mainly used on behalf of Totalfina.

Meanwhile, 50,000 people have died in the most recent fighting in Eastern Congo, and one million are refugees. Most of the fighting involves child soldiers used by the different militias as cannon fodder.

This is the essence of capitalism and imperialism in the 21st century: wars, mass murder, starvation, all on the altar of profits. For the sake of our children and humanity, let’s build an international movement to destroy this rotten system and build communism.✪

The Secret Holocaust

Many millenniums ago, the great leap in evolution developed the first humans in Central Africa’s Rift valley in the Great Lakes region. Their offsprings populated the entire world, changing appearances to adapt to different climates and environments.

For centuries, the Congo was protected from pillaging by the European descendants of these primates because of its jungles and difficult-to-traverse rivers. Portuguese and Arab traders bought slaves from the coastal tribes who had captured them from their inland enemies. The colonialists then sold these slaves in the New World.

The rough climate, geography and flies which destroyed horses kept the colonialists away from the inland Congo until the end of the

19th century. It was the last place in Africa to fall to European empires, and became the private property of Belgium’s King Leopold II. Leopold never set foot on his property but died one of the world’s richest men after 20 years of pillaging the Congo and killing 15 million people. (Mark Twain waged an international campaign against this 19th century holocaust.)

The Congo was ruled till the early 1960s as a Belgian colony. When Leopold’s heirs departed, they left the country in ruins, without any basic services. Then Patrice Lumumba, a left-wing anti-colonialist, became Congo’s Prime Minister and tried to improve conditions. But he was too friendly with the Soviet Union so the CIA organized his assassination and installed their agent Mobutu in power. It’s gone from bad to worse ever since.✪

LETTERS

Solidarity Needed vs. Racist Layoffs

Recently, Mayor Bloomberg announced the layoff of 2,000 school workers in the New York City Department of Education. They're overwhelmingly black and Latin women. Some are school aides who monitor lunchrooms, playgrounds and assist in the front office, members of District Council 37. Others (paraprofessionals) assist teachers in the classroom are members of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT). The attack on these workers illustrates the racism of the City's cutbacks. However, scratching further one can see that Mayor Bloomberg and other Republicans may have another agenda.

School aides were introduced 30 years ago under the then Mayor Lindsay's plan to decentralize the school system. After massive protests by black and Latin parents against their children's inferior education, Lindsay (along with the Ford Foundation) pushed decentralization to take the heat off the central Board. Part of the "community control" plan was the hiring of school aides, mainly black and Latin workers. When the school reform movement was in its progressive stages the school aides were on the front lines in bringing in black, Latin and working-class history to the public schools.

Soon the Democratic bosses began to exercise power over the schools; community control became "Democratic Party control." Superintendents, principals and school aide positions are generally approved by the Democratic hacks, providing the Democrats with a certain mass base. Under the guise of "school reform," Bloomberg decided to weaken this base by layoffs and "restructuring" the Department of Education. First he hired Joel Klein, a former CEO. Now come the racist layoffs. UFT president Randi Weingarten has launched a lawsuit over the school-aide layoffs.

Lawsuits will not stop these cuts. Only solidarity among teachers, aides and parents can save these jobs.

NYC UFT Member

Friendship Grows From Struggle

A comrade and I recently visited with a laid-off construction worker. Joe reads CHALLENGE and took three to a youth group meeting he attends. He has come to a PLP forum and helped write and distribute a Party leaflet. We met Joe through the struggle over his wife's firing. She was unable to win her job back, but the struggle put PLP on the map as a fighting organization. Whenever we fight racist injustice and exploitation, it counts toward the ultimate victory over our oppressors.

Our conversation with Joe was friendly and stimulating. He had been a member of the black Muslims under Elijah Mohammad, but left when Wallace Mohammad & Farrakan split into two factions.

We discussed how communists view religion and nationalism; ideologies that mislead workers and help the ruling class maintain its power. Black nationalism means black workers should ally with black bosses, as if exploitation is a function of color. Exploitation is built into capitalism, no matter what color our oppressors are.

Religion keeps our class in chains by telling us we have no control over our destiny, that an all-powerful spirit (god, Allah, Christ, etc.) controls all. The Russian and Chinese revolutions provide clear examples of how workers, under a communist party, were able to smash their capitalist oppressors. Under the right conditions, PLP will lead millions in the worldwide movement for a communist society. We can and will control our destiny.

Joe also wanted to discuss secret ruling class groups, like the Skull & Bones society, the Illuminati, and the Masons. I am not familiar with these groups, but hopefully, others can write to CHALLENGE and explain how they serve the bosses.

We need workers like Joe and his courageous wife to join us, and help lead the struggle for working-class justice. He really enjoyed watching the May Day video. Long live PLP and communist revolution!

A Comrade

JROTC Teaches Lies About Bosses' Wars

Many of my friends active in the "peace movement" are thinking about the long-term problems of fighting imperialist wars, and are trying to figure out the reasons for these wars. This is a good development, as they realize that the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are but two in a string of wars.

This has sparked many good discussions. I explain that these wars result from the inevitable crisis of capitalism and they'll continue until a revolutionary movement led by communists wipes out capitalism. Although many of my friends are not yet convinced, they are open, and reading CHALLENGE with them has been very helpful.

Some people are active in a campaign to throw JROTC off high school campuses, leading to much discussion. JROTC is a class taught by retired military officers as a substitute for a Physical Education (PE). Students spend enough time marching around to satisfy the PE requirement, and a lot of time in class learning military organization, strategy and tactics, and how great U.S. imperialism is. It's funded both by the military and the school district, and the former sees it as one of their best recruiting programs. In our district, it's in schools with mostly black and Latin students.

My friends say JROTC is racist because it recruits largely black and Latino students for serial warfare, and sets low expectations in poor communities. They say that part of building an anti-war movement is to fight JROTC. I've commented that the worst thing about JROTC is not its recruitment of youth to the military — the economic situation today does that. The worst thing is political: its textbooks push patriotism and justify every imperialist adventure the U.S. has ever undertaken. Students are taught, first and foremost, to uncritically follow orders.

We know that working class youth — especially black and Latin — will join the military. U.S. imperialism relies on these youth to fight its wars. But will they enlist knowing they're part of an international working class which has suffered from imperialism worldwide as well as in the U.S.? Or will they go on thinking the U.S. is the best of all possible societies and has the right to rule the rest of the world?

“Half a million U.S. soldiers deserted; many fragged (shot) their own officers and sabotaged six aircraft carriers. This was the birth of the Vietnam Syndrome.”



When they get to Iraq (or wherever the next war is) the struggle over what ideas they hold only sharpens. As occupation meets resistance, and soldiers continue to face attack from a hostile population, they face alternatives. Some realize they shouldn't be there and begin to demand to be sent home. Others are won to racism and begin to see the entire conquered population as the enemy. As things sharpen, these choices become sharper. In Vietnam, U.S. troops massacred civilians. My Lai was only the most famous. There was also massive resistance to fighting and a total break-down of authority — GI's defying their officers. How soldiers react in these situations is largely determined by what they think about the world.

So I tell my friends that the fight is not to keep youth out of the military, but to educate them about the nature of U.S. imperialism and to win them to an anti-racist, pro-working class point of view. We should debate JROTC teachers in the schools, and require that all students in JROTC classes be given an anti-imperialist history of the U.S. to combat the military's lies. We have the truth on our side, and we should fight for the allegiance of the youth.

A Comrade

CHALLENGE COMMENT:

The comrade's point is well-taken. It is true that soldiers' reactions are influenced by how they see the world, but their reactions also have much to do with the international class struggle. The old communist movement led its last great battles during the late 1960's.

In China, millions of Red Guards were rebelling for communism against the capitalist roaders who today have turned China into a massively exploited, cheap-labor country. In Vietnam, the communist-led resistance was actually defeating U.S. imperialism. Rebellion was occurring worldwide as millions protested against imperialist war and racism. The huge urban rebellions against police brutality and racist unemployment in the U.S. also influenced U.S. soldiers, particularly black GI's. For these soldiers the enemy wasn't the Vietcong but their own officers and the racist military. Half a million U.S. soldiers deserted; many fragged (shot) their own officers and sabotaged six aircraft carriers. This was the birth of the Vietnam Syndrome which the U.S. bosses so greatly fear, and which slowly but surely is beginning to haunt them once again (see front page).

Subscribe to the only communist working class newspaper:
CHALLENGE

For a one year subscription send check or money order for \$15 to: CHALLENGE PERIODICALS PO BOX 808. BROOKLYN, NY 11202

Cops Run Scared When Workers Unite

Our city's public hospital saw the meaning of "workers power" when they fired one of our co-workers.

The day after the firing she came to the hospital cafeteria. The hospital had been leafleted that morning so everyone knew she was coming.

"The cafeteria looks like Fort Knox," one worker said. A group of us walked with her into the cafeteria. Hospital security and city police were waiting for us, along with the union recording secretary who tried to stop us, claiming what we were doing was "illegal."

We had a petition for everyone to sign demanding our co-worker be reinstated. After she explained to Security why she was there, they decided not to act against her so the "suits" came in.

The Chief of Security and his assistant tried to get us to leave the cafeteria. Many people gathered around us. Security and the cops were running scared. At one point a cop yelled into his radio, "All units to the cafeteria." No one paid any attention. Everyone was asking for the petition. There were about 40 people around us, telling our co-worker they supported her. People were ignoring the cops. Workers were telling her, "If you don't come back to work, we'll go on strike." After about an hour we decided to leave, but the rally continued outside for another hour.

When talking to other workers later that week, one said it reminded her of the civil rights movement days. When she was seven years old she had seen Martin Luther King, Jr. speak at a church. She said she was glad she came [to this action] to let them know "we're going to fight." Another worker told me, "She didn't have to be terminated so we're going to fight for her. I didn't feel intimidated. I felt I could fight. The struggle for the leadership of our union will continue. The president of the union has decided to ally with the bosses, to keep peace with them. We choose to fight with the workers."

Most of these workers read our paper and we're pushing forward with them. The next step is to recruit them to the Party.

A Hospital Worker

Is what's good for the company good for the workers?

In September the company president had a meeting at the factory where I work

continued on next page

Expose Mexico's Bosses In Fight vs. Layoffs

State of Mexico, Mexico, June 10

"The bosses are thieves, a parasitic class that must be eliminated," said a leaflet distributed inside a freight company famous for being repressive. That's how the workers responded to the firing of two workers for having taken a can of chilies. The bosses were furious at the exposé of how they become rich through robbery and exploitation. They've since launched a frantic campaign to repress the rebellious workers.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development says the Mexican economy has low productivity. The country's consequent loss of markets has rattled the ruling class. They're desperate to turn this situation around by imposing fascist working conditions, punishments, suspensions, threats, lengthening work-

hours, increasing the amount of work and through arbitrary firings.

Gabriela was fired because she refused to work 10 hours for 8 hours pay. Carlos wouldn't work 12 hours for 8 hours pay, so the bosses claimed he "improperly" used a computer and fired him.

The firing of Gabriella, the murders of the women workers of the maquilas (sweatshops) of Juarez, the sexism and racism that are behind these tremendous crimes, the millions of single mothers who fight to survive and are thrown on the street by the bosses — all this demands that we fight to destroy this murderous decaying capitalist system, which is incapable of offering us decent lives. We need more women in PLP to provide the communist leadership that the working class needs.

The workers are in motion in a slow but sure process: their class hatred and anger is being directed to intensify the class struggle, build unity with other workers and a network of CHALLENGE readers to give political leadership to all workers.

Mexico's bosses are losing market share to their Chinese competitors. Their union hacks from the CTM (main Mexican labor federation) organized a violent nationalist demonstration against merchandise made in China. We workers must not fall into this bosses' trap. The commodities, the



Along with the horrible working conditions that workers in Juarez, Mexico face, over 300 women have been raped and killed since 1993. Here a man looks at flyers of some of the women missing.

market, productivity and nationalism are all bosses' institutions and policies to increase the exploitation and oppression of the whole working class. International workers' unity and the fight for communism can put workers on the offensive against the bosses' constant attacks. Join PLP.✶

No Mere 'Technicality'

Soviet Workers Saved World From Nazi Scourge

June 19th was the 50th anniversary of the execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg for "conspiracy" to give U.S. atomic secrets to the Soviet Union during World War II (see CHALLENGE, 6/25). A "review" of the case appeared in the New York Times (6/15) by Sam Roberts, author of a book about Ethel's brother David Greenglass who admitted lying to send his sister to the electric chair. Roberts, in explaining why the Rosenbergs "weren't charged with treason," says "the Russians were technically an ally in the mid-1940's."

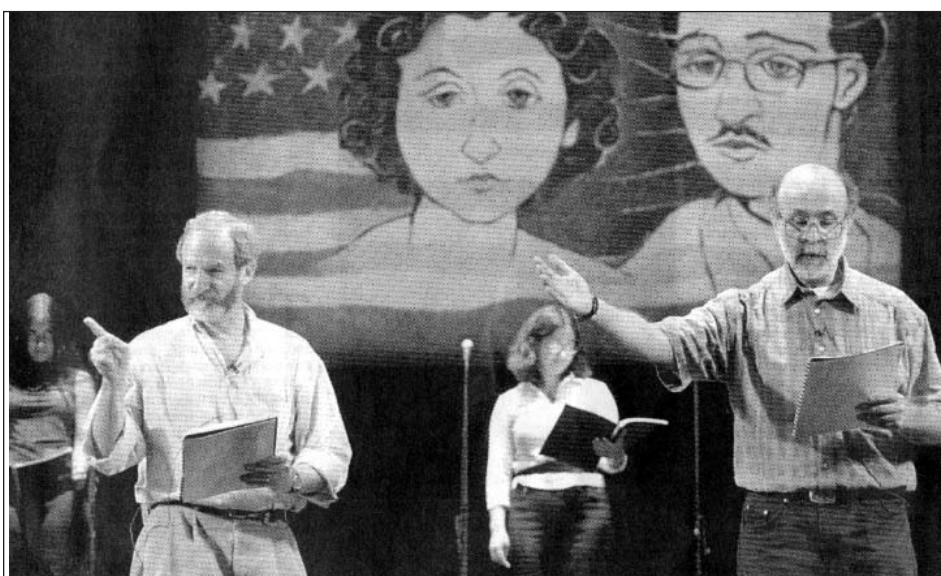
While Roberts' "technical" definition may apply to the U.S. ruling class, the Soviet workers and Red Army were most definitely a true ally and comrade-in-arms to the international working class, including U.S. workers.

On June 22, 1941, 3,000,000 Nazi troops — until then perhaps the most committed military machine in world history — invaded the Soviet Union along a 2,000-mile front. After conquering Western Europe in two months, with Britain on its knees, Hitler was boasting that they would be in Moscow in six weeks (a prediction shared by this same NY Times and the rest of the U.S. press).

The Soviet Red Army became the first force to halt the Nazis, fighting alone against Hitler for 2½ years and defeating the Nazis at Stalingrad, the turning point of WWII.

Amid this most massive confrontation of armies the world had ever seen, the Soviet working class transported all its heavy industry eastward beyond the Ural Mountains to keep its weapons production beyond the reach of the Nazi attackers. That would be like moving all the factories from Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Detroit and Chicago west of the Mississippi.

Simultaneously, Soviet workers pursued a "scorched earth" campaign, burning and destroying everything in the western Soviet Union to prevent Hitler's invaders from using these resources. That's the



Michael and Robert Meeropol, the children of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, rehearse for a remembrance for their parents.

equivalent of "scorching the earth" from New England to Florida and the entire Appalachian Mountain states.

Between 20 and 30 million Soviets died in WWII. The COMBINED losses of the U.S. (under 300,000), Britain (500,000) and the entire British Empire (120,000) was less than one-twentieth of those suffered by the Soviet Union. (See "The World Almanac of World War II," p. 614.)

The D-Day U.S./British invasion of France took place while the Soviet Red Army was battling 80% of Hitler's army on the Eastern Front. If Hitler had conquered the world's first communist-led country and millions of Nazi troops were turned loose on the West, they would have invaded and probably conquered the U.K. All those "Private Ryans" waiting to be saved would never have reached France. A British general said had Hitler defeated the Soviets, millions in Britain and the U.S. would have been killed. Far fewer "baby boomers" would have ever been born.

The Soviet workers and their Red Army, led by Stalin, saved humanity from the Nazis. Such was the magnificent role of our

"technical ally."

U.S. and Nazi rulers were racing to produce the A-Bomb. Both would have used it against the USSR. Why wouldn't a communist like Julius Rosenberg, seeing the embattled Soviet Union fighting the Nazis virtually by itself, want to help it develop such a weapon? "Treason" to the U.S. ruling class? Yes! Loyalty to the international working class? Absolutely!

Now the U.S. ruling class is surpassing Hitler, launching endless wars and mass murder for profits and world domination. Millions die because of capitalist-caused hunger, poverty, racism and unemployment. Since the defeat of the world communist movement, there is little opposition to its war machine. The only answer to this new fascist/imperialist monster is the building of a new international communist movement that can organize the world's working class to do to U.S. bosses and all capitalists what the Soviet workers did to the Nazis.✶

Letters Continued from page 6

to announce it was growing and was building a factory in Mexico. Most of the workers cheered. They thought that what was good for the company would be good for us; 85% of the 600 workers are from Mexico. Many felt proud that the new factory was in "their country." When I cautioned the workers not to be so happy, some said I felt that way only because I am from another country.

In January workers from the new factory came here for training. They said they make a flat \$6/day, less than dollar an hour. We get \$8/hr. plus production bonuses. My co-workers began to worry. One said, "The company can get rid of one of us and hire 10 workers in Mexico for the same money."

In May the company laid off all 80 workers supplied by an outside agency. Management also announced that a job performed by 320 workers here was also being done in Mexico, and that workers on that job here who made three mistakes would be fired. Most workers doing this job have worked for this boss for more than seven years, some for as many as 25 years. "Auditors" began watching everyone and making notes, but not saying anything. So far, three workers have been fired. There are rumors that the entire factory will close in October.

Many workers are now telling me that what I said last October was true. What's good for the company is NOT good for the workers. More workers are understanding that Mexican nationalism - like all nationalism - is harmful to workers. Five workers have been reading CHALLENGE.

We plan to ask these five workers to join PLP and help us increase our circulation. We also plan to demand that the union - which has done nothing - meet, prepare a defense against contract violations, firings and layoffs, and get accurate information from management about its intentions. We're also organizing a barbeque to get the workers together away from the factory. We have to figure out a way to unite with the workers in the factory in Mexico.

An Internationalist Worker

Black GI's Fought Nazis and U.S. Military's Racism

(This continues the review of "American Patriots, The Story of Blacks in the Military," by Gail Buckley. The author depicts black soldiers trying to defend "their country," despite encountering virulent racism. She cites Colin Powell as the "heights" that black soldiers have achieved in the military and doesn't indicate that patriotism serves the rulers or that U.S. imperialist wars were fought in the ruling class's interests, although WWII had a distinct anti-fascist character. This series concentrates on the bravery of black soldiers despite intense racism. Our previous issue covered the Civil War, World War I and the Spanish Civil War.)

World War II

When WWII began, the U.S. armed forces were still segregated. White officers generally commanded all black troops. Lynchings were common on the home front. According to liberal President Roosevelt, "No black issue, from making lynching a federal crime to desegregating the military was more important than appeasing the southern wing of the Democratic Party." (p. 259)

In 1940, black unemployment was at 20%. Black workers referred to Roosevelt's "New Deal" as "the dirty deal." Fifteen enlisted black Navy messmen — promised they'd learn a trade — wrote a letter to the Pittsburgh Courier (a black paper), warning others who enlisted that, "All they would become is seagoing bellhops, chambermaids and dishwashers." (p. 263)

Racism was intense. "In the winter of 1941...the military ordered 'white blood' only. Blood segregation was mandated by the military..." (p. 268) No "black blood" could be given to wounded white soldiers!

When USO entertainers put on shows for the troops, "black soldiers were forced to sit behind German...POWs." (p. 261) In 1943, the actress and singer Lena Horne (mother of this book's author) refused to entertain at an Alabama army camp because German prisoners of war were seated up front and black soldiers in the back. Ms. Horne was kicked out of the USO (United Service Organization organizing wartime entertainment). After that she only entertained black troops.

"The 93rd [all-black] Division saw action under General Douglas MacArthur...but from Hawaii to Australia fought more white racists than Japanese." (p. 277)

In December 1944, the Germans' counter-offensive, the so-called Battle of the Bulge, rocked Allied troops back on their heels. A desperate General Dwight Eisenhower, supreme commander of all Allied troops (and future President), allowed black troops to volunteer for combat; 2,221 did. But fighting alongside white soldiers would mean desegregation, so instead Eisenhower put them in

all-black platoons under white commanders.

Two months earlier, in October, General Patton's Third Army had bogged down in France's Saar basin and needed replacements. The only combat armored units in the U.S. were black. The 761st tank battalion was selected. "When they moved by train to Fort Knox...the unit was ordered to pull down the shades, for Kentucky whites were in the habit of shooting at passing black troops." (p. 327)

The 761st was rushed to relieve the embattled white troops. After five furious days of fighting, they forced the Germans to retreat back into Germany. By April 27, the 761st crossed the Danube, spearheading the assault that, by early May of 1945, advanced into Austria. On May 6 they united with the westbound Soviet Red Army, in the hugely photographed meeting of East and West.

"Between March 31 and May 6, the 761st took 106,921 prisoners, an average daily rate of 2,813, including 20 German generals...[and] liberated the Gunsirchen concentration camp." (p. 331)

Eisenhower refused to award the 761st the Distinguished Unit Citation (DUC), although 12 white units received it. In 1978 they finally received the DUC for "extraordinary heroism," and "accomplishments [that] were truly magnificent as the successful crossing of the Rhine River into Germany was totally dependent upon the



accomplishment of their mission."

"When the movie 'Patton' was released in 1970, no mention was made of the 761st.... They had...stayed longer on the front line than any other armored battalion...riding deeper into Germany. But only one black was portrayed in the film: Patton's orderly." (p. 331)

Buckley concludes, "The 500,000 black American men and women who served in Europe, North Africa and the Pacific in the 1940s would have bitter memories of the military.... [which] enforced American-style racism wherever it went. Black GIs fought fascism on two fronts in World War II — at home and abroad, where, as often as not, the enemy wore an American uniform." (p. 261)

(Next issue: the Vietnam War and Gulf War I.)

THE FIRST U.S. HERO OF WORLD WAR II

"The first American hero of World War II was black. On December 7, 1941, at Pearl Harbor, Dorie Miller was a messman on the burning deck of the U.S.S. West Virginia. Miller,...son of a Texas sharecropper, ...manned an anti-aircraft gun to bring down...four Japanese planes.... Miller had never been taught to fire the...gun; it was against Navy regulations for blacks to do

so. Only when the ammunition was exhausted and the [battleship] was sinking beneath him did he abandon ship....

"The first Navy dispatches from Pearl Harbor described him as an 'unidentified Negro messman.' Apparently embarrassed that the first hero of the war was black, the Navy found a white hero in Captain Colin Kelly, killed on December 9 in a crash-dive onto [a] Japanese battleship....

"[Miller] remained a messman until he died [in] 1943, when all hands went down on the torpedoed carrier Liscome Bay." (p. 275)

The Secret War Against U.S. Military Veterans

In recent months thousands of young GI's have been shipped to war in the Middle East. Some won't return. Those who do may become part of the rapidly growing number sickened by depleted uranium weapons and other weapons of mass destruction used by the U.S. military. These vets are also at risk from service cuts back home.

The government says it honors and cares for soldiers risking their lives in the bosses' wars, while cutting veteran's benefits. In Chicago, the Veterans Health Administration is closing the VA Lakeside Hospital, which just happens to sit on prime real estate sought by millionaire developers.

Meanwhile, a recent American Legion survey of over 3,000 veterans found the average vet waits seven months for an appointment. Then the VA reschedules 60% of the time, so the vet must wait another 2½ months for the new appointment!

According to the Chicago Tribune (5/11), "[Forrest] Costner, 55, who served in the Army's 1st Infantry Division in Vietnam

from 1966 to 1969, tried to sign up for VA health care in November, 2000 when he began to worry about losing his job. Costner was still waiting for a VA appointment when his employer let him go in October [2002!]."

A cancer survivor who takes medication for diabetes and high blood pressure and who is still jobless, Costner has been paying \$700 a month for insurance while the VA keeps him in limbo." The government tells you, 'We'll always be there for you when you need us' when you go into the military, but it seems like once you've done the job for them you really don't matter that much anymore."

The U.S. Supreme Court just ruled against aging veterans from World War II and the Korean War (Schism vs. the U.S.) Thousands of vets had been promised lifetime medical benefits when they enlisted. Now it's "Sorry, we don't have the money — you're on your own."

As a protest sign said during an anti-war demonstration: "Rich man's war, poor man's blood." The billionaires running the

government has no interest in the "promises" made to idealistic young military recruits. The sons and daughters of the working class are used and discarded when the new market, natural resource or other economic target has been captured. The bosses gorge themselves on oil profits while the veteran struggles for medical care.

The only war that makes sense for workers is a class war. The working class produces everything of value. It's the autoworker or oil derrick operator or nurse who makes it happen, not the Exxon stockholder or hospital CEO. The soldiers carry the guns. When revolutionary ideas grow in soldiers' minds, the generals get nervous. One day those in power will pay the price for their arrogance. They underestimate our ability to learn the lessons taught by today's abuses. But we're learning. We'll turn their profit wars into class war — communist revolution for workers' power.✪

**For July 2003,
A New Edition of**



With articles about the War in Iraq, Racism Still Achilles Heel of U.S. Capitalism, The Fight Against Sexism, Religion: Tool of Bosses, Enemy of Workers, Dialectical Materialism and much more.

**For a copy, send \$2 to
Challenge Periodicals,
PO Box 808
Brooklyn, NY 11202**